

### Abstract of the Invention

A system for forming composite video images from one or more foreground images and one or more background images. In one embodiment, a sum of a suppressed foreground image signal with weight  $\alpha$ , with one or more selected foreground colors suppressed, and a background image signal with weight  $1-\alpha'$  ( $0 \leq \alpha' \leq 1$ ) is formed, where  $\alpha$  and  $\alpha'$  may vary from pixel to pixel and with time. In another embodiment, a shadow from a selected foreground image is impressed on selected pixels of a background image. In another embodiment, foreground suppression and shadowing are combined, optionally by retrofitting, using an existing  $\alpha$ -mixer or a newly constructed  $\alpha$ -mixer. Provision of a chroma key map allows a foreground image shadow to be prescribed pixel by pixel, including a transition region in which the shadowed image slowly disappears.